

Northeast Michigan Healthcare Workforce Alliance Interview with Diane Shields, Chief Human Resources Officer, Alpena Regional Medical Center

1. What benefits did you hope for when you decided to be part of the RSA? [First, let the employer speak, then ask about: access to new training programs, a chance to collaborate with other employers to identify and address workforce challenges, help paying for training for current workers, and better access to qualified job candidates.]

The most significant benefit at the beginning was the opportunity to network and collaborate with other hospital employers.

2. So far, of the benefits you expected, which have you actually seen? [Test the same list.]

By far the biggest benefit has been the hospitals coordinating efforts and sharing best practices related to the summer health career camps, for example.

3. Were there benefits other than those you expected? [First, let the employer speak, then test: joint ventures with other employers, access to better information about workforce issues in the industry, better information about the economy in general, connections with high-quality training providers.]

Inviting students from the WIA program to participate in the summer health career camps was an added benefit in that these students are more likely to look for professions that will allow them to stay in their local community. This will provide a long-term payoff as these students receive future training in health professions and stay in northern Michigan to work in local hospitals. Many parents commented on what a difference it made for their students and provided a good will benefit to the community. The directory of health professions offered in northern Michigan is also a great benefit that was not anticipated. The tuition reimbursement for incumbent workers allowed several RNs to elevate their education to BSN thereby providing the critical thinking skills needed in our facility. These employees would not have been able to continue their education without the support of the incumbent worker funds.

4. What results are you expecting from the RSA over the next year or two?

I would like to see the NE RSA continue to provide financial support for programs like the summer health career camps and the tuition reimbursement program. These special projects and programs are often the first programs to be cut since they are not critical to patient care. But they are critical in the long term to securing a pool of qualified candidates to work in health care.

5. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements and, especially, why:

- a. "MiRSAs are a much better way for government to work with business/not-for-profit community-owned hospital."

Agree, it provides the flexibility for the community to address the local issues as opposed to implementing broad statewide mandates.

b. "They make Michigan a more attractive location for business."

Agree, fewer mandates/regulations and more local control is always better and may actually draw more employers to the state.

c. "My participation improves the odds that my business will succeed."

Absolutely, my organization would not have been able to provide the additional tuition reimbursement scholarships or the summer health career camps without the support and participation of the NE RSA. Participation in the NE RSA helps my organization succeed in the long-term.

d. "It has already had an impact on my bottom line" [Ask exactly how.]

There will be a long-term impact on our recruitment budget resulting from the economies of scale achieved in doing these projects jointly.

e. "The RSA has other kinds of value to my business" [What are they?]

Networking, sharing of best practices.

f. "I would encourage other employers to get involved with a MiRSAs" [Ask why.]

Absolutely, without the networking you become isolated.

The notes above are an accurate account of my interview regarding the Michigan Regional Skills Alliance in which I participate. I authorize the RSA and the State of Michigan to disseminate the story publicly.

☒ You may use my name and the name of my business.

☐ You may not use identifying information, only the content of the interview.



(Signature)

9-7-06
Date